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A
COMMENT
ON
BOADICIA,

With REMARKS on
MILLS'S LETTER.

To which is added,
A PROLOGUE,
To be Spoke at its REVIVAL.

By W. RIDER, A. B.
Late Scholar of JESUS COLLEGE, OXON.

“MODESTE & circumspecto judicio de tantis viris pronuncian-
“dum est, ne, quod plerisque accidit, damnent quod non
“intelligunt. At si necesse est in ALTERAM ERRARE par-
“tem, OMNIA eorum legentibus PLACERE, quam MULTA
“DISPLICERE maluerim.”

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COMMENT
ON
BOADICIA

MILLET'S LETTER

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A PROLOGUE

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To be spoken at its REVIVAL.

BY W. RIDER, A.B.
Late Scholar of Jesus College, Oxon.



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COMMENT
ON
BOADICIA.

 Nature has formed us for Society, and furnished us with Affections, which make our Happiness consist in a Reciprocation of kind and benevolent Offices; it is with no small Reason, that we find the * sublimest Geniuses of all Ages passionately fond of Fame, and indefatigable

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* " Neque enim est hoc dissimulandum, quod obscurari non potest, sed præ nobis ferendum: trahimur omnes LAUDIS STUDIO, & optimus quisque, maxime gloria ducitur."

Cic. pro Archia. §. 11.

" Good Name in Man or Woman

" Is the immediate Jewel of their Souls."

Shakespear's Othello.

B+

to acquire and support their Reputations.—Whoever therefore shall make it his Study to depreciate the Merits, to destroy the Credit, and ruin the Reputation of a Fellow-creature, should not only be looked upon as an Enemy to the Species, but be esteemed unworthy of the most exalted Title affixed to the rational and social Nature, I mean, *HUMANITY*. The censorious and ill-natured Critick has always been branded ^b as a *Monster*, with indelible Infamy; while the good-natured have been honoured with that Degree of Immortality they laboured to bestow on others ^c. Hence it is, that so much *Veneration* has always been paid to the Writings of *Aristotle*, *Horace*, and *Eustathius*, and so much Infamy has always been affixed to the Names of *Tberfites*, *Zoilus*, and *Dennis*. Antiquity has enforced this Observation by a witty Resentment, having ranged the applauding Critick among the noblest Class of Writers, and at the same Time ascribed the Malevolence of invidious Censure to the low Genius of a ^d *COBLER*; for *Caricaturas* are within the Sphere of every little Dauber, but the Head of a *Venus* requires the masterly Hand of ^e *Apelles*. Had not this been the unvaried Practice of all Ages, the Estate of *Letters* would have been very low at present; for it is no uncommon Remark, that those Persons, whose Works have met with the greatest Applause, were

^b Ἀνθρωπομόρφον ὄντιον. *Phil. Jud.* Vid. *S. Haf. & Wollast. Rel. Nat.* p. 139. Ed. 6.

^c *Essay on Criticism*, Verse 504, &c.

^d *Plin.*

^e “Posidonius scribit in quadam epistola, P. Rutilium Rufum dicere solere, ut nemo pictor est inventus, qui Coæ Veneris eam partem, quam Apelles inchoatam reliquisset, absolveret, oris enim pulchritudo reliqui corporis imitandi spem auferbat.”

Cic. de Offic. lib. 3. c. 2.

were always of so prodigious a Modesty, that, had they not been *forced* into the World, they would have lived and died in Obscurity.

THE present Age, however it may have degenerated in other Respects, seems to maintain its Dignity, and vie with Antiquity in this amiable Qualification. Every new Personage that has trod the Stage, has met with an Approbation equal to his most sanguine Expectations; and our *Polite* seems to have been pushed so far, that a bare *Attempt* to please has very often been honoured as if it were actual Desert. Those who have cultivated *Dramatic Poetry*, have, generally speaking, met with as much Encouragement as *they* could think they merited. But, I could wish that this Conduct had been without *Exception*, and that one, whose private Character steals the Applause of every one, had met with that Approbation from the Public, as a Dramatic Writer, which a Piece of so finished a Kind not only *deserved*, but seemed to *claim*.

THE *French*, who rival us no less in Works of *Literature* than in *Commerce*, have always acknowledged our Writers equal to their own in *Genius*, though inferior to them in *Regularity*; and, to push this boasted Advantage as far as they could, have always, in their Criticisms on our Writings, laid so much Stress on the *Conformity to Rules*, as to represent the Advantages of *natural Parts* of no Significancy. 'Tis with this View, that our immortal *Shakespear's* Deviation from Rule has always been the favourite Theme of the *French Critic*,

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while

The Letters of *le Blanc* and *Voltaire's* Préface to his *Mérope*, *Zaire*, and *Semiramis*, are flagrant Instances of this *Injustice*.

while his inimitable Beauties have been passed by unnoticed.

As Regularity and Delicacy of Taste are then the only Points in which the *French* Stage could claim an Advantage over us, that Person, who should endeavour to introduce them on our Stage, should by every *Englishman* be esteemed a Friend to his Country; for by thus heightening the Character of our Dramatic Poetry, he at the same Time aggrandizes that of the Nation. The general Invectives that have been cast on our Taste, have indeed been such as are defensible upon no other Grounds, than the noble Characteristic of our Nation, an *invincible* LOVE OF LIBERTY; and this Reason seems to be alluded to by the best Poet, and best Critic this Age has produced, in these Lines:

“ The *Rules* a Nation born to *serve* obeys,
 “ And *Boileau* still in Right of *Horace* sways;
 “ But we, brave *Britons*, foreign Laws despis’d,
 “ And kept *unconquer’d* and *unciviliz’d*;
 “ Fierce for the *Liberties* of Wit, and bold,
 “ We still *defy’d* the *Romans*, as of old.”

Essay on Criticism.

OUR most celebrated Pieces have been accused of the greatest Absurdities, and the very Exhibition of them esteemed a Matter of Wonder. The Comic Strokes in our Tragedies have afforded no small Employment for the Gall of Satire, their Violation of Probability have been a copious Field for Criticism, and the savage Scenes that have employed our Performers, have been construed not only into a general Reflection of the Want of Taste in the Audience, but made the Grounds of making Cruelty

Cruelty one of the Characteristics of the Nation: Our Love-scenes have been esteemed *fulsome*, our Actions episodical, our Characters outrageous, our Catastrophe's shocking. The Duration of our Action has likewise furnished Grounds for *Reflections*, and the Violations against all the Unities imputed to us as the Height of *Rusticity*. Our Poet being convinced that these *Invectives* were not without Grounds, and that, as long as they subsisted, our Character, as Dramatic Writers, must be very low in the Eyes of Foreigners, has set himself to wipe off these Aspersions; and, by conforming to the Rules of the Ancients, has shewn our Enemies, that their so much applauded Regularity was at the Option of every *Briton*, who would stoop to it. To this let me add, in the Words of no despicable Writer, “⁸ If the judicious *Voltaire* were to criticise it, he would allow this Production to be *conformable* to his own *Delicacy* and *good Sense*, and deserving a Place amongst the *best modern Tragedies*.”

If the perpetual shifting of Scenes, and transporting us in one Moment a thousand Miles, and the next a thousand more, while we are conscious we have not moved from our Seats, be reckoned an Absurdity, 'tis an Absurdity which the Author of *Boadicia* has avoided, by confining the Scene of Action to one Spot before the Tent of *Dumnorix*; but as several Incidents fall out during the Action, which would not be proper to introduce on the Stage, and though performed out of the Spectators View, yet necessary to be known, the Poet has, with singular Address, preserved the *Unity of Place*, by bringing them so near the Scene of Action

Action as to be seen by his Heroes, and by them related to the Audience; and in this Respect he has observed the Rule of the *Roman*,

———“ *Multaque tolles*
“ *Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.*”

HOR. A. P.

I might add, he has *adorned it!* for as the very *Essence* of Dramatic Poetry is *Action*, every Thing should be *active* in it; and our Author has not *barely related* these Circumstances, which the *Ancients* generally do, but, by representing his Heroes as *seeing* them at the very Time they speak of them, he gives them a Degree of *Life* that a subsequent Relation cannot claim, and makes the Audience almost Spectators of the Incidents.

BUT while we are thus doing *Justice* to the Merits of the Author, we may be told that his Play is *deficient* in a very *material* Point, and that a *capital* one too; that is to say, it has *no Intrigue*: “For without an *Intrigue*, a Play would be but a “bare *Dialogue*, or Set of Dialogues.” These are the Words of a Gentleman who has appeared as an Antagonist to our *Author*; and as they contain in them all that is said in the remaining Pages, I hope he will think it no Neglect if we pass by some Inaccuracies which make him more despicable in the Eyes of the World as a *Grammarian*, than all his *Irony* can make Mr. *Glover* as a *Dramatic Writer*. ’Tis no Wonder that this Gentleman should not have been able to discover a Plot, when, at his first setting out, he entirely mistakes the very *Design* of the Piece. “What I suspected, says he, “at the very Beginning of the Play, *viz.* that “the

“ the Romans would have conquered the Britons,
 “ was what really happened ; I presumed some
 “ Incidents might have intervened, to have ren-
 “ dered the Catastrophe dubious.” But if we will
 credit our Author the *Design*, or *Moral* of the
 Piece, was the “ *fatal Fruits of Strife* ;” and if
 we take this as a Key, we shall find an Intrigue
 worthy of the Author. The Action of the Play
 is the Discord between *Boadicia* and *Dumnorix*,
 who is for revenging herself on that Chief for op-
 posing her Intentions to sacrifice the Roman Cap-
 tives. The Efforts the Queen makes to revenge
 herself on *Dumnorix* for his Position, and those
 that are made by the other Personages to quell her
 Anger, are what form the Plot ; and as the Mind
 is uncertain whether the opposing Parties can pre-
 vail on the Virago to be reconciled, the Suspence
 which we are under, during these Circumstances,
 may be a sufficient Vindication of the Intrigue
 from the Charge of too much Sameness. Those
 who insist upon a *Variety of Incidents* to entangle
 the Mind, and perplex the Understanding, should
 be informed, that as the inculcating *some* useful
 Truth is the Design of the Poet, the more he
 keeps *that* in the Eye of the Audience the better
 he effects his Design, and the more *lively* will the
 Impression be. The Stagyrice has told us, that
 there are two Species of Fable, one of which is
 simple, and the other implex ; as the former is
most natural, and has the Countenance of several
 of the *greatest Dramatic Writers* among the *An-*
cients, it should, I think, want nothing to recom-
 mend it to our Approbation ; but those, who, not-
 withstanding, will confuse these different Species
 together, and draw the Sword of Censure against
 our Author from thence, deserve nothing but Ri-
 dicule

dicule from their Readers, and Contempt from the *Literati*.

I AM sorry to have spent so much Time on this Criticafter, when I recollect that the *Author* of a FEW REFLECTIONS had given him sufficient Information in this Point, and had answered all that he could object *before* he sat him down to write. The Objection he makes to the Title of the Play, is of the same Kind with that he has made to the Plot, and equally betrays his own *Ignorance*; but as the inimitable *Shakespear* words it, let him “hoist with
“his own Petar.—It is usual, says he, to denomi-
“nate a Play from the principal Character in it.” The first Scene *Boadicia* appears in that Light; in the fourth, *Dumnorix* owns her so; in the seventh, the Charge he gives *Venusia* to appease her, is a Confirmation of it. In the second Act, where *Venusia* undertakes her Office as a Suppliant, is she not proved still more so? In the fifth Scene, *Ænobarbus*’s Speech still represents her in this Light. In the third, when *Ænobarbus* says,

—If *Boadicia*

Return once more, our Destiny is fix’d.—

How can we help esteeming her as a chief Person? When *Dumnorix* comes with Standard, does he not own her such? In the third Scene, we see her still in this Light; in the fourth she appears the same; but it would be tedious to cite more Passages. Let these serve as well as those *uncited*, to shew, though we do not see *Boadicia* in every Act, we hear of her in every Scene, and hear her always mentioned as the Chief of the Drama,

It would be needless to mention the Address of the Poet in avoiding the grand Crime which the *French* object to us, of admitting Murders on our Stage. It would be impertinent to observe how religiously he has abstained from that vicious Use of *Simile*, which our Poets are so fond of on every Occasion, and which the *French* justly condemn as improbable and absurd.

BUT though the Poet has subjected his Genius to *Rule*, he has not fettered it; his Delicacy has not been productive of Coldness; his Correctness has not cramped his Invention; nor his Veneration for the Stagyrte restrained his Muse from soaring to the Regions of the *true Sublime*. To convince ourselves of this Truth, let us attend to those Beauties of Diction of Sentiment and Elocution, which, like the Constellations of Stars that compose the Milky-way in the Skies, pour on the Mind one uninterrupted Emanation of Lustre, and affect the Soul with an incessant Exercise of Admiration. The Character which ancient History delivers us of *Boadicia*, is preserved throughout this Piece with so great an Uniformity, that there is not *one Expression* affixed to her Part which is not suitable to a Person of her Disposition, nor is there one Sentiment given her by the Author, which would become the Mouth of any *other* Personage. The Cause of that Boistroufness, in which she terrifies us, is equal to the Effect; and when we hear the Detail she gives us of her Injuries she received from the perfidious Barbarity of the *Romans*, are we at all surprized at her insatiable Thirst of Revenge? When in Answer to the *Roman's* Declaration of War she replies,

We are prepar'd.

Come from your Hills, ye fugitive Remains
 Of shatter'd Cohorts by their Fear preserv'd.
 Th' embattled Nations of our peopled Isle,
 Yet fresh from sev'nty thousand slaughter'd *Romans*,
 Shall add yon Refuse to the purple Heap.
 And yet amid triumphant Desolation,
 Though Flames each *Roman* Colony devour,
 Though each distracted Matron views her Infant
 Grasp with its tender Hands the piercing Spear,
 Though your grey Fathers to the Falchion's Edge
 Each feeble Head surrender, my Revenge
 Will pine unsated, and my Greatness want
 Redress proportion'd to a Queen's Disgrace.

Do we not admire that Height of Soul which has always characterized our Nation, and that Courage untamed by Oppression, for which Foreigners have so justly admired and applauded the *English* Name. I need not point out to you the happy Choice of Epithets that occur in this Passage, or the Assemblage of Ideas which progressively excite, encrease, and confirm our Terror. In the fourth Scene, when in Opposition to *Dumnorix's* setting the *Roman* Captive free, she breaks out,

What do I hear? A *British* Chief's Command?
 Whoe'er unchains a *Roman*, on Mankind
 Lets loose Oppression, Insolence and Rapine;
 Sets Treason, Falshood, Vice, and Murder free.

THE passionate Abruptness of the first Line is so strong a Mark of a Temper, exasperated by unheard-of Injuries to Revenge, so expressive of the violent Spirit of the Virago, that it gives us
 no

no small Idea of the Poet's Knowledge of human Nature; and the Climax in the three last Lines has such a near Relation with the Heroine's personal Afflictions, that the Poet's Address seems to be no less admirable.

If from *Boadicia* we turn our Eyes to the fair *Venusia*, how is our Soul divided by a Conflict of Passions? In the one we cannot but applaud a noble and a justly warmed Resentment; in the other, we cannot but approve of the milder Temper of Forgiveness; and the Contrast, in which the Poet has introduced these two opposite Dispositions, is so judicious, that we cannot but admire his Address, and extol his Judgment. No Painter has ever mingled Light and Shade with more Advantage, nor in an historical Piece introduced a Group of Figures, where they should better serve to reflect Beauties and Glories on one another, when *Venusia* says,

Of all the Paths, which lead to human Bliss,
The most secure and grateful to our Steps
With Mercy and Humanity is mark'd.
The sweet-tongu'd Rumour of a gracious Deed
Can charm from hostile Hands th' uplifted Blade,
The Gall of Anger into Milk transform,
And dress the Brows of Enmity in Smiles.

How does the Heart yearn over every Syllable!
Is not every Breast interested in Behalf of her Plea?
Is not every Soul an Advocate in her Behalf? With what a Softness do the Lines flow, what a Smoothness is in every Verse, and what a beautiful Choice of Epithets appear throughout the Whole! What a fine Opposition is raised between the Gall of

Anger and Milk, between the Frowns of Rancour, and the Smiles of Mercy ! But the Fineness of the Sentiments is not all that is to be admired, the Appropriation is not less charming. Had it been in the Mouth of *Boadicia*, it would have been forced and unnatural ; it would not have been consistent with the unpolished Majesty of *Dumnorix*, nor would have been agreeable to the false Magnanimity of *Ænobarbus*, or the less alarming Fortitude of a *Flaminius* : But with what Address is it introduced in the Character of the mild, the soft, the affectionate, the delicate *Venusia* ? If I recollect, the great Father of the *English* Dramatic has likewise thought fit to put a Speech on the same Topic in the Mouth of a Female, in his *Measure for Measure* ; and with great Propriety : For if we consider, that the softer Affections characterize that Sex, who seem to be sent into the World on purpose to soften the rustic Bravery of our Sex, and by communicating their Delicacy to the human Species, to render them as much like to the Female Race, as the Female Race resembles the Angelic. Let those, who represent our Poet's Lines unadorned, consider this Speech with Impartiality, it is sufficient to convince them of their Mistake, and to free him from a Foible, which they are pleased to miscall a Perfection. Those who can peruse the passionate Speeches of *Boadicia*, without professing that there is Spirit and Fire in our Poet's Lines, must reflect upon themselves the very Defect which they would affix on the Author, that of being too cold. Those again, who accuse him for too great a Sameness, seem not to understand what is Variety, or not to have attended to the different Conflicts which the Rage of *Boadicia*, the Softness of *Venusia*, the calm Fortitude of *Dumnorix*,

Dumnorix, the romantic Bravery of *Ænobarbus*, the rational Calmness of *Flaminius*, alternately raise and destroy. Did conjugal Reproof ever show itself in more amiable Terms than those which *Dumnorix* makes Use of in this Passage :

Tell me, thou lovely Coward, am not I
As terrible ? Or falls the *Roman* Sword
On the tough Buckler, and the crested Helm
With deadlier Weight, than mine ? Away and fear
not ;

Secure and calm, repose thee in thy Tent ;
Think on thy Husband, and believe, he conquers ;
Amid the Rage of Battle he will think
On thee ; for thee he draws the martial Blade ;
For thy lov'd Infants gripes the pointed Ash.
Go, and expect me to return victorious ;
Thy Hand shall dress my Wounds, and all be well.

THERE is such a noble Sentiment couched in the two last Lines, that I think cannot be rivalled by any but those that immediately succeed.

Fear not. I tell thee, when thou seest my Limbs
With Dust bespread, my Brows with glorious Sweat,
And some distinguish'd Wound to grace my Breast,
Thou in the Fulness of thy Love shalt view me,
And swear, I seem most comely in thy Sight.
Thy Virtue then shall shew me worthier of thee,
Than did thy Fondness on our nuptial Day.

WHAT a Sublimity is couched in these few Lines ! How does the Warrior dignify the Lover ! How does the Courage of the one rival with the Affection of the Husband ! How great does the Contempt of Danger appear, when we consider that
the

the Warrior can speak of his Dangers without the least Terror, and looks on all his impending Distresses as Glories! Must we not be apt to conclude, that as no Hero seems to have feared Danger less, or to have loved his Wife more, that he is in this Respect a true *Briton*. But if we admire *Dumnorix* in this Speech, how must we applaud him in that which concludes the first Act. Addressing himself to his Men, he says,

You, Warriors, destin'd to begin the Onset,
My *Tribonantians*, it is Time to seek
Th' embattled Foe. And you, all-judging Gods,
Look down benignant on a righteous Cause!
Indeed we cannot give you, like the *Romans*,
A proud and sumptuous Off'ring; we abound not
In Marble Temples, or in splendid Altars:
Yet though we want this vain, luxurious Pomp,
Rough though we wander on the Mountain's
Head,

Through the deep Vale, and o'er the craggy Rock,
We still demand your Favour; we can shew
Hands, which for Justice draw th'avenging Steel,
Firm Hearts, and Manners undebas'd by Fraud.
For you, my dauntless Friends, what need of
Words?

Your Cities have been sack'd, your Children slain,
Your Wives dishonour'd: Lo! on yonder Hills
You see the Spoilers; there the *Ruffians* stand:
Your Hands are arm'd; then follow, and revenge.

The affectionate Address with which this Speech opens is beautifully interrupted with an Apostrophe, that breathes such a noble Idea of the Divine Attributes, and such a magnanimous Consciousness of meritorious Virtue, that our Souls seem to be

be upon the Stretch to entertain an Idea worthy of the inimitable Hero. And the Return to his Soldiers, after this beauteous Apostrophe, favours so much of the Warrior: The Arguments made use of to inspire their Courage are so well chosen, follow so close together, and are urged so concisely, that they seem finely adapted to the martial Character: But what Force do they receive, when he seems to break off in the Middle of them, and in a Transport points to the very Persons he is endeavouring to exasperate them against. This unexpected Turn must certainly fire, not only his Soldiery with an impetuous Resentment, but even make the very Audience cry out, FOLLOW and REVENGE.

LET us attend to the Speech of *Ænobarbus*, to the Expostulation of his Friend *Flaminius*.

I am thy Friend,
And I will make a *Roman* of thee still;
But let me see no languishing Dejection
More on thy Brow, nor hear unmanly Sighs.
Gods! Can'st thou dream of Love? When yonder see,

The *Roman* Legions, all array'd for Battle,
Are now descending; see their dreaded Eagles,
Their dazzling Helmets, and their crimson Plumes;
A Grove of Jav'lins glitters down the Steep;
They point their Terrors on th' astonish'd Foe;
Soon will they charge the *Britons* in the Vale,
And with th' auspicious Glories of this Day
Enrich the Annals of imperial *Rome*.
O curst Captivity! with double Weight
I feel thee now! malicious Fate! to suffer
A *Roman* thus to stand confin'd in Bondage,

And

And see the Triumphs which he cannot share.
By Heav'n, *Flaminius*, I will never bear it.
Where is thy *Briton*? Will she lead us hence?
Else, by the God of War, unarm'd I rush
To join the glorious Scene, which opens there.

THERE are such a Complication of Beauties in this Passage, and such a true Sublimity breathes itself in every Sentence, that I am at a Loss for Words to express the Idea it conveys of the Poet's Genius. My Bosom feels such a Variety of Motions, while my Pen travels through each successive Line, that I despair of doing Justice to the Author. Almost all the Graces of the Sublime seem to be amass'd in this Speech. The sudden Interrogation, the Change of Persons, the unexpected Transition which *Longinus* recommends as essential to Sublimity, mutually assist and enoble one another. The Description of the distant Battle is so exact, that even in the very Closet we become Spectators of the Fight: But when we hear the Exclamation of, O curst Captivity! Does not our Soul at once startle at, and applaud the *Roman's* Magnanimity? The Apostrophe to his Friend adds Fuel to the Fire he had raised in the Breast of every Spectator, and prepares us so well to receive his Resolution in the concluding Verse, that our Fears persuade us that he should rush unarmed to join the glorious Scene.

THE Poet seems to have stretched his Imagination so much in this last Speech, that one would be apt to think it impossible for him to keep up the exalted Character he has given us of *Æno-barbus*.

BUT

BUT it is not the Nature of *his Fire* to grow *dim*; it glows intensely through the whole, and rather seems to *increase* than to *diminish* its Splendor. Let the following Speech in the Third Act be a Confirmation of what I assert.

O *Mars* and *Vesta*!

Is it a Vision, which you raise before me
To charm my Eyes? Behold a Scene, *Flaminius*,
To cheer a *Roman* in the Gasp of Death.
The *Britons* are defeated; look, *Flaminius*;
Back from the Vale in wild tumultuous Flight
Behold their Numbers sweeping tow'rd the Hill;
Already some are swarming up its Side
To reach their Camp for Shelter; pale Dismay
With hostile Rage pursue their broken Rear,
While Massacre, unchidden, cloy's his Famine,
And quaffs the Blood of Nations. O in vain
Dost thou oppose thy Bosom to the Tide
Of War, and brandish thy recover'd Standard;
Vain is thy animating Voice to those,
Whom Fear makes deaf; O *Dumnorix*, thy Toils
Are fruitless, *Britain* in the Scale of Fate

D

Yields

^h This is a beautiful Allusion to the most sublime Passage that occurs in the three great Masters of Epic Poetry. *Homer* in his *Iliad* is a close Imitation of the *MENE TEKEL* in *Daniel*.

His great Copyist *Virgil*'s runs thus:

"Jupiter ipse duas aequat examine *lancas*."

"Sultinet, & fata imponet diversa duorum:

"Quem damnet labor, & quo vergat pondere lethum."

ÆNEID xii. 725.

Milton's, which is introduced with more Address than either of the preceding, seems to be more peculiarly alluded to by our Author.

The Eternal

Hung forth in Heav'n his golden Scales,

— In these he put two Weights,

The Sequel each of parting, and of Fight;

The latter quick flew up, and kick'd the Beam, &c.

Paradise Lost, Book iv. Ver. 1000.

Yields to the Fate of *Rome*. No, Life, farewell:
Shine on, bright Phœbus, those, who rest behind
To share thy Splendors, while I sink in Darkness,
Are far beneath my Envy; I resign
These Eyes with Pleasure to eternal Shades,
They now have seen enough.

If we now envy the *Romans* the amiable Light
in which the Poet has set their Courage, 'tis Time
to consider the Character of *Dumnorix* and *Venusia*;
and we shall be convinced, as a periodical Writer
informs us, "That the Author's Intent in raising
our Ideas of the *Roman* Virtue so high, was on-
ly to raise those of the *BRITISH* still higher."

This appears very conspicuously in the following
Speech of his to *Boadicia*.

—— Heavenly Rulers!
How have the *Britons* merited this Shame?
Have we with fell Ambition, like the *Romans*,
Unpeopled Realms, and made the World a *De-
sart*?

Have we your Works defaced; or how deserv'd
So large a Measure of your bitterest Wrath?

FROM *Dumnorix* let us turn our Attention on
Venusia's Address to her Sister.

Look on a prostrate Sister! Think, thou hear'st
Our Children's plaintive Notes enforce my Pray'r,
And *Albion's* Genius mix his solemn Moan;
That Lamentations through thy Ears resound
From all the Wives and Mothers of those Thou-
sands,

Whose

Whose Limbs lie stretch'd on yonder Fields of
 Death;
 Those wretched Wives and Mothers, oh! reflect,
 But for the fatal Discord of this Day
 With other Looks, with other Cries and Gestures;
 With diff'rent Transports, and with diff'rent
 Tears
 Might have receiv'd their Sons and Husbands
 Home,
 Than they will now survey their pale Remains,
 Which there lye mangled by the Roman Sword
 To feed the Raven's Hunger—yet relent!
 Yet let restoring Union close our Wounds,
 And to repair this Ruin be thy Praise!

SUCH Motives as these, one would be tempted
 to say with *Dumnorix*, “No Cruelty could hear
 unmov'd.” There is such a Pathos breathes through
 the Whole, that the Perusal melts the Heart, and
 fills the Eyes. The Topics made use of are so well
 adapted to the Female Character, so well chosen,
 rise on one another with so much Advantage, and
 are so beautifully contrasted, that we cannot help
 exclaiming, that a Poet, who is so true a Repre-
 senter of the Yearnings of a Wife and a Mother,
 must himself deserve no small Applause in his
 Character as a Husband and a Father.

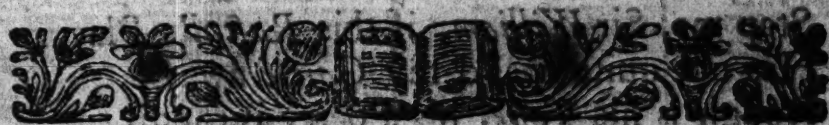
LET this serve as a faint Specimen of the Beau-
 ties which occur in this regular Piece; and while
 it excites our Admiration, let it encrease the Shame
 of its Adversaries. To copy all its Charms, would
 be to transcribe the whole Piece; to produce all its
 Virtues, would be endless. But as it has been the
 Intent of this Comment to take Notice not of
 those Passages which have been commended by

others, which would be needless, but of those which seemed most proper to *oppose* to the *popular Objections*, so, as *they* are sufficiently refuted, to proceed in the *Comment* would be entirely *unnecessary*.

If I shall have engaged any Person, by what is offer'd, to change his Sentiments in Behalf of *Boadicia*, I shall think myself sufficiently recompenced for my Trouble; and if I am so happy as to prevail on the Public to demand its *Revival*, I propose the following Piece for that *Occasion*.



P R O -



P R O L O G U E.

AT once to blunt the Edge of *Gallic* Rage;
 To raise our Merits, and reform our Stage,
 To borrow Graces from the *Grecian* School,
 And teach the *tragic* Muse to walk by Rule;
 Our Poet strove,—bold Task!—but strove in vain,
 And where he sought to please, he met *Disdain*.
 Sir *Nykin* knows not aught of *tragic* Laws,
 But to dissect his dreadful Wit he draws.
 “Methinks, my *Duck*, this Piece is much too cold,
 “The Thoughts are flat, and—and the Queen
 “too bold.”

This whisper'd he that faithful Judge—his *Wife*,
 The Joy, the Bane, the Treasure of his Life:
 But let me dare inform the *doating* Elf,
 She owns a *Boldness*.—Where?—Why, in *himself*.
 Stop—who alarms us there with *critic* Thunder?
 'Tis no less Wight than noble Teague O' *Blunder*!
 His monstrous Hands three dreadful Catcalls hold,
 Plain are his *Pockets*, but his *Cloaths* are Gold:
 “By *Chresht*, my *Honey*, dost thou think it right,
 “That we should *shee* all Murders out of *Sight*?
 “That *Blood* shou'd flow, and not a Drop be shed,
 “Nor *Boadicia* tell us she is dead?”——
 Sir, *Nancy* in the front Box feeds his Nose,
 The Star of *Belles* and Oracle of *Beaus*.

“Stap

" Stap me, Sir *William*, if this *Rascal's* Play
 " Has not quite chas'd my *Gaieté* away :
 " Rough is his *Taste*, his Poetry is rough,
 " And the whole Piece is damn'd romantic Stuff.
 " What Husband now of *Taste* adores a *Wife*?
 " What Woman for her *Spouse* wou'd quit her
 " Life ?

" What Mother will her Quality disgrace,
 " To plant *stale* Virtue in her future Race ?
 " My Sentiments, Sir *William*, to declare,
 " I think the Poet is *trop visionaire*."

But Censure to the Gall'ry soaring strays,
 All Fools can *blame*; since Wisdom dwells in
 Praise :

No *Ghost* attracts their never weeping Eyes,
 No Murders *charm*, no Outrages surprize;
 Us'd at one Glance a thousand Leagues to roam,
 One Scene confines the struggling Soul at Home.
 Well might these Critics call the Author Fool,
 Whose greatest Joy is not to judge by *Rule*.
 Such was the Fate our modest Poet found,
 Cypress, not Bays, his blushing Temples bound.
 The Critic too with you hath taken Part,
 And plung'd the Steel of Rancor in his Heart.

But, *Britons*, once more view the tragic Store,
 Explore its Merits, and its Charms explore;
 Revive the drooping Poet with Applause,
 Give Joy to Worth, give Strength to tragic Laws.
Gallic shall then with aching Bosoms view
 Her greatest Glories far surpass'd by you;
 And your Stage boast the Critic's fam'd Desire,
 A *RACINE's* Judgment join'd with *SHAKESPEAR's*
 Fire.

